

NTT INDYCAR SERIES

News Conference

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Alex Palou

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Congratulations to our champion, winning again here at Road America, Alex Palou with Chip Ganassi Racing, picking up his third win of the season, third in the last four races, seventh career win. You might have seen the celebration down in Victory Lane. 250th overall win for Chip Ganassi Racing as an organization.

Alex, you kind of made it look easy. I'm sure it wasn't, though.

ALEX PALOU: It wasn't, it wasn't. It was great to start up there saving a bit of fuel at the beginning. I think everybody was on the same situation. Then everything started moving a lot with those cushions. Did a couple of mistakes there with Josef. Lost a position there.

But, yeah, we kept on pushing. Great pit stops. Fought for the win at the end. Yeah, the speed that we had this weekend was huge and gave us the opportunity to win today.

THE MODERATOR: We talked about some of the action on track. 444 on-track passes today.

ALEX PALOU: Wow.

THE MODERATOR: 386 were for position. 110 in the top 10, 32 in the top five.

ALEX PALOU: Lots of action.

THE MODERATOR: Luckily for you it's all behind you.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, yeah, I'm glad to hear that and not to see that because that's a lot of passing.

THE MODERATOR: Between that and the job your team did in getting the 10 car ready to race today, a heck of a weekend for you guys.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, we started really good. We didn't test here last week, so we knew that we had a lot of work to do with the new pavement. We started with a lot of

speed on practice one. Practice two I did a huge mistake. I had a lot of speed again, but crashed it very hard. Yeah, we almost had no time to rebuild the car. They did. They not only got the car back on track, but it was fast. Almost got the pole. Fought for it.

Yeah, it's been a good weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Could you sense that Colton was either losing his grip and also running out of push to pass? Was it just waiting for the right moment for you to pounce?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly the first couple of laps that he did on the blacks, he was really, really fast. I was like, Man, he's pushing very hard. I don't know if I can catch him.

Once my tires were into temperature, I was able to catch him. I saw that he was struggling a little bit more. He had to save more fuel than us because he pitted one lap early. We were just a little bit better on tire deg, as well.

I was just trying to push him to use the push to pass, then overtake him. It worked. So, yeah, he was doing a great race. I don't know if they were struggling a lot on the alternates. Actually he was pulling away on the alternates, as well.

Yeah, great day for us.

Q. What was Saturday like for you as a team? I imagine they had to go through everything with Dixon as well. How hectic was everything?

ALEX PALOU: Obviously it wasn't the cleanest day for the 9 and the 10 car. They had a lot of work. Honestly, they made it. As I said, we not only made it on track, but we had fast cars.

Honestly, I was not concerned on the speed that we were going to have. I was more concerned of losing track time and not knowing how the balance was going to be for qualifying.



We made it. We made it to Fast 12, Fast Six. Yeah, great team behind. As I said, I was never concerned on the situation of the car. I was just concerned on myself getting up to speed. But we made it happen.

Q. A bit of a hectic last lap with Marcus. What was the team telling you? Was everything all right from your end after that?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, honestly they couldn't tell me because from turn eight until Canada Corner, there's no radio. Well, it's very hard, so we decide not to talk on those corners to avoid misunderstandings. They couldn't really tell me.

Suddenly I saw a car. I didn't know it was Marcus. I don't know what happened. Yeah, quite on the edge there. Honestly, having a good five-second gap allowed me to just take it easy there and overtake him.

Q. With the larger points lead, 71 points now over the rest of the field, is it difficult to think you have this, or just push flat out, we're going to race for wins no matter what?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I would understand racing for points on the last two races, but it's too early. We did eight races. There's still eight or nine left.

Yeah, I mean, somebody else can do the same amount of points that we did, or even more, with the races that we have left.

Yeah, we're going to focus on scoring wins because that's the way we can score more points. That's the best way. Honestly, there's some races coming up now that are still really good for us and we know we're going to have a car and my confidence to fight for wins.

Q. Can you explain your variation of red and black tires after the race, degradation, grip, the difference between those two?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, it was tough for everybody knowing ahead of the race with a new pavement and not a lot of riding on the alternate tires.

We knew they were not as fast as the black tires. Deg, as well. It was a worse tire. That's why top 10 started on primaries.

Actually I was a bit surprised by how well they were during the race. They were slow, but they were not crazy slow compared to primary.

Yeah, it made the strategy very interesting. I think that allowed so many passes on track, for sure.

Q. Yesterday a bunch of people went way off. You got shoved off today. Two-wide through five. What was the difference? Why could people run side by side today and pass?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I mean, I think the crashes and the mistakes on drivers in general, it's because there's so much grip on the new tarmac that allows you to push in the limit. Obviously when you're on the limit, there's huge crashes or huge mistakes.

That's good. I mean, a track that rewards aggressive driving and searching on the limit, I think it's the kind of track that drivers like.

Then in terms of passing, I think it's actually going to be even better next year because the track surface was still too new. On the exiting or the outside of the corners, it was a bit slippery. I think we're not going to have that next year, so it's going to be even better racing.

Q. Seems like it got way better between yesterday and today.

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, I don't really know. I think it was just by more cars running, just getting more tire rubber on track in general from other series as well.

But, yeah, we were able to brake on the inside and get passes. I lost two positions. I got two back. Yeah, it was possible to overtake.

Q. Josef and Pato talked about your lead, trying not to focus on how far ahead you are. Do you have the opposite feeling where you're kind of worrying about where the potential difficulties are going to come or do you try not to worry about that, focus on what you can control?

ALEX PALOU: No, I mean, everybody can win seven races in a row. It's tough in INDYCAR, but we can do that. Somebody else could do that.

We're going to focus on each weekend. Each weekend is different. It's like the work starts from zero. We're taking that mentality this year. I think it's working, it's paying off.

So yeah, I'm glad that we have those points in our camp, and we don't have to catch other people, but I'm not relaxed by the points gap at all because it's INDYCAR. If it was another series, yeah, maybe I would be a bit more relaxed. In INDYCAR you can't.

We're going to keep pushing and trying for the wins, focus on the championship the last couple races.

Q. Do you feel better having the experience of 2021?

ALEX PALOU: Yeah, absolutely. I feel a lot better. In '21, everything was new for me. I didn't really know how to manage stuff. It was all new for me.

At least now I have some more experience both on track and off track. Hopefully we can maintain that gap.

Q. Lap 23, I think you ran wide turn five, then Josef said hello at turn six. Talk us through that move. Were you surprised there was no action there? Did you have enough room?

ALEX PALOU: It was my mistake. I was saving fuel. I braked just a little bit the apex. As I said, offline was a bit more slippery. Just got over on the exit curb, got a big (indiscernible) oversteer, lost a position there. Completely my fault.

Then, yeah, we touch. Obviously he didn't gave me enough room, but he already apologize. Honestly I knew he was not doing it on purpose. It was just he thought that there was enough room.

So, yeah, no issues at all. I think I did that to somebody on the first couple of races. I think it was St. Pete. You open a little bit the corner to make it happen, suddenly you touch.

It looks worse on TV than what it feels on the car. Yeah, I mean, coming from Josef, I know it was not on purpose.

Q. Do you feel like you are getting the coverage you should be getting from the Spanish-speaking world? We don't see a lot of Spanish-speaking reporters in person. I feel like you deserve more coverage. Do I just not see it?

ALEX PALOU: I mean, I think I get the coverage from like the specialized media, which is Enrique is always here, there's some other people that they are always here following us.

But yeah, in general, obviously there's not a big interest. I said that always. I mean, I'll always be lucky to have specialized media from Spain, like I said, Enrique, covering us. The normal media is only focused on other Spanish people, which is okay.

I tried hard on the first couple of years, especially when I

saw Fernando at the Indy 500, all the coverage that he was getting, then I started getting, but it was just because it was questions related to Fernando. I knew how everything was working there.

Honestly, I have zero energy focusing to that. I'm living in the States. I'm racing in the States. I think I have the coverage that I deserve in the States. Then I know the people that is specialized in INDYCAR and in motorsport, they are going to cover and they are going to follow us, people like Enrique.

Yeah, it's all right.

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